



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 20, 2025

Location: Flynn Pavilion, 4435 Muse Rd., Detroit, MI 48207

Meeting began at 9:01 a.m.

Present for BIPAC

Dr. Meagan Elliott

Dr. Brian Banks

Virtual:

Angela Lugo-Thomas; Highland Park

Dr. Lonnie Peek; Sherwood Forest

Absent

Michael Curis

Sommer Woods

DNR Staff Present

Tom Bissett

Amanda Treadwell

Cynthia Boggerty-Craft

Mary Kaphengst

Darlisa Terrell

Griselda Trevino

Others Present

Amy Greene, Detroit Zoological Society

Nancy Vella, BIC

Chair Elliott called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and did a roll call. A quorum was present.

Chair Elliott then called for a motion to approve the February 20, 2025 meeting minutes. Member Banks made a motion to approve, supported by member Howard. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, gave the park updates that covered park maintenance including bike lane cleaning, restroom closures, Scott Fountain's restoration projects, staffing updates, and booth operations.

Sgt. Pete Purdy was present from DNR law enforcement and had nothing new to report. He answered questions about summer traffic and speed enforcement.

Amanda Treadwell, Urban Field Planner, presented the infrastructure updates, which included the Belle Isle Aquarium and Conservatory HVAC project, Scott Fountain structural repairs, zoo removals, shelter and bathroom facilities, casino repairs, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail, Nature's Megaphone, and the Remick Bandshell (presentation attached). She answered a question about the future of the zoo area of which the plan is for it to be made as a natural, quiet area per the desire of the public's input.

Tom Bissett brought to attention the heavy amount of litter that is left in the park, which is taxing on the environment and staff who have to clean it up. He urged everyone to get the word out to use the trash bins. Dr. Elliott said if you are interested in helping with cleanups, there are volunteer events you can sign up for. Information can be found on the Conservancy's web site.

Dr. Elliott gave the Conservancy updates, highlighting Greenfest which they will be hosting on April 12 – 13 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. that will have engaging programs for families to learn about the environment and how they can take part and what that means for Belle Isle specifically. Information can be found on the Belle Isle Nature Center's website.

They will be spending time in June and July participating in community engagement. They want to hear of big community meetings that are coming up that they can be a part of. They want to bring Belle Isle out to the neighborhoods and share and listen. She would also like to know what ideas or things people want to hear about at the Belle Isle Advisory Committee meetings.

Public Comment

David Carleton – Spoke about the bandshell and recent meetings with the DNR and the City regarding the boathouse.

Norma Kyle Shaw – Informed the group that the Music on Belle Isle concert series starts in June every Wednesday, with a wide variety of music.

Candice (written comment) - Thank you Mr. Carlton and everyone who is trying to bring back the bandshell and the boathouse. Really means a lot as I'm a HUGE history buff. And spoken to a few via email that I really hoped the boathouse would be reused to not only preserve the boat club history but also public accommodating. With the project on the zoo and everything else going on and with the fountain, really excited.

Amy Hubbarth – Excited to hear about the boathouse and the bandshell. Asked about the entrance to the park if there is a way to redirect the traffic, engage with the public and add safety strips.

Diane Cheklich – Commended the DNR and Conservancy on the sustainability initiatives and appreciated that they listened to the feedback on the zoo. She commented on the beaver management on the island.

Lisa DiChiera (written comment) - Congrats to Suzanne and Craig for fundraising efforts for bandshell! Preservation Detroit turnout for boathouse talk was over 100 people. Congrats to Stephen and David. Can we understand next meeting any impacts on the island/MDNR from federal funding cuts?

Member comments

Dr. Banks requested a tour of the island. Dr. Elliott said they are in the process of organizing them.

Reverend Peek suggested community engagement with the Council of Baptist Pastors of Detroit.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Next regular meeting: April 17, 2025.



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

March 20, 2025



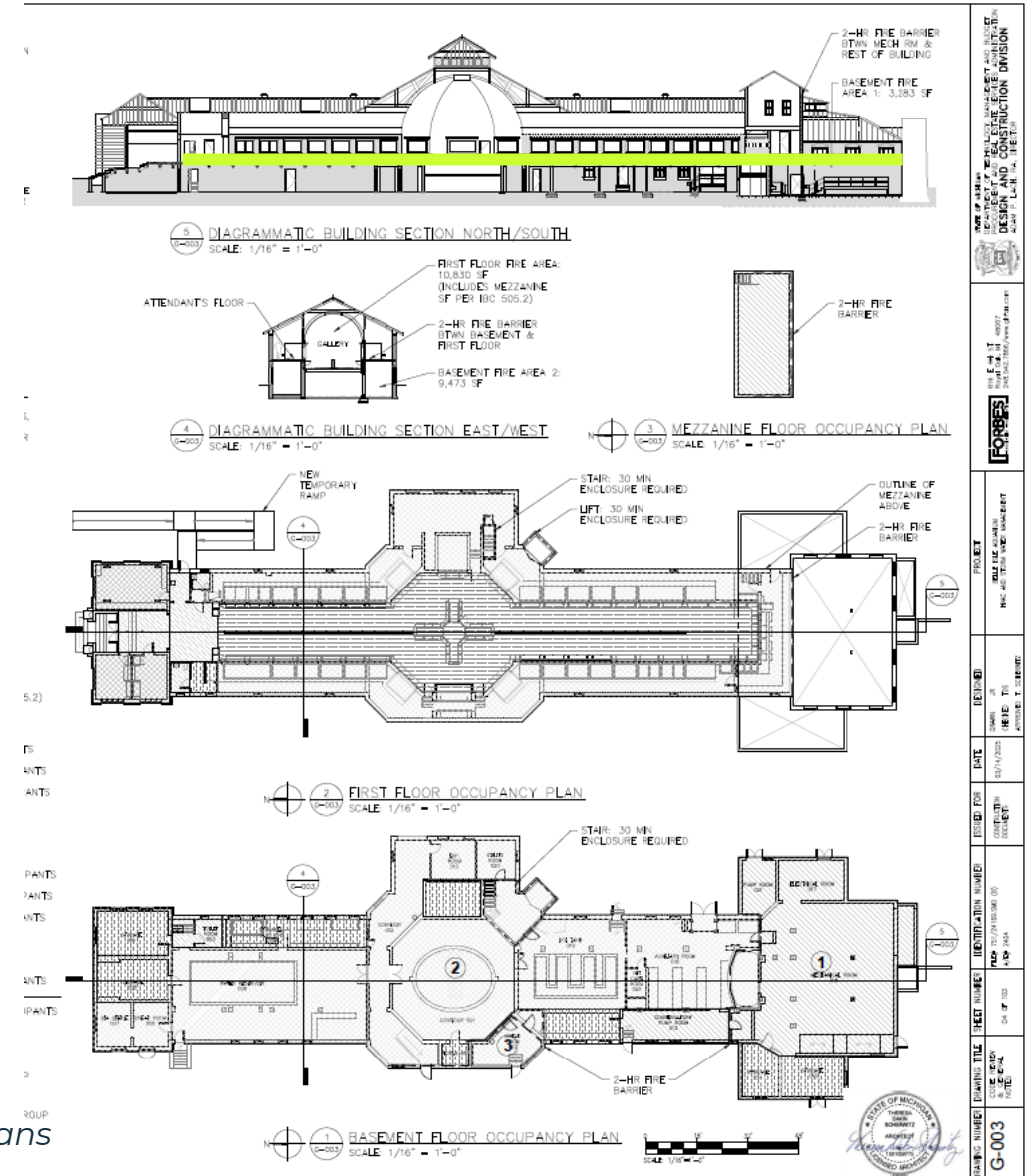
ARPA Project Update

American Rescue Plan Act

Bid Schedule: Construction Bid Packages to be advertised in early April and expect to be Awarded late May.

- **Belle Isle Aquarium and Conservatory HVAC**
 - New Heating and Ventilation system for BIA.
 - New drainage system to be installed around BIA to protect building and new HVAC equipment.
 - New Heating System will tie into Conservatory

Belle Isle Aquarium HVAC Plans



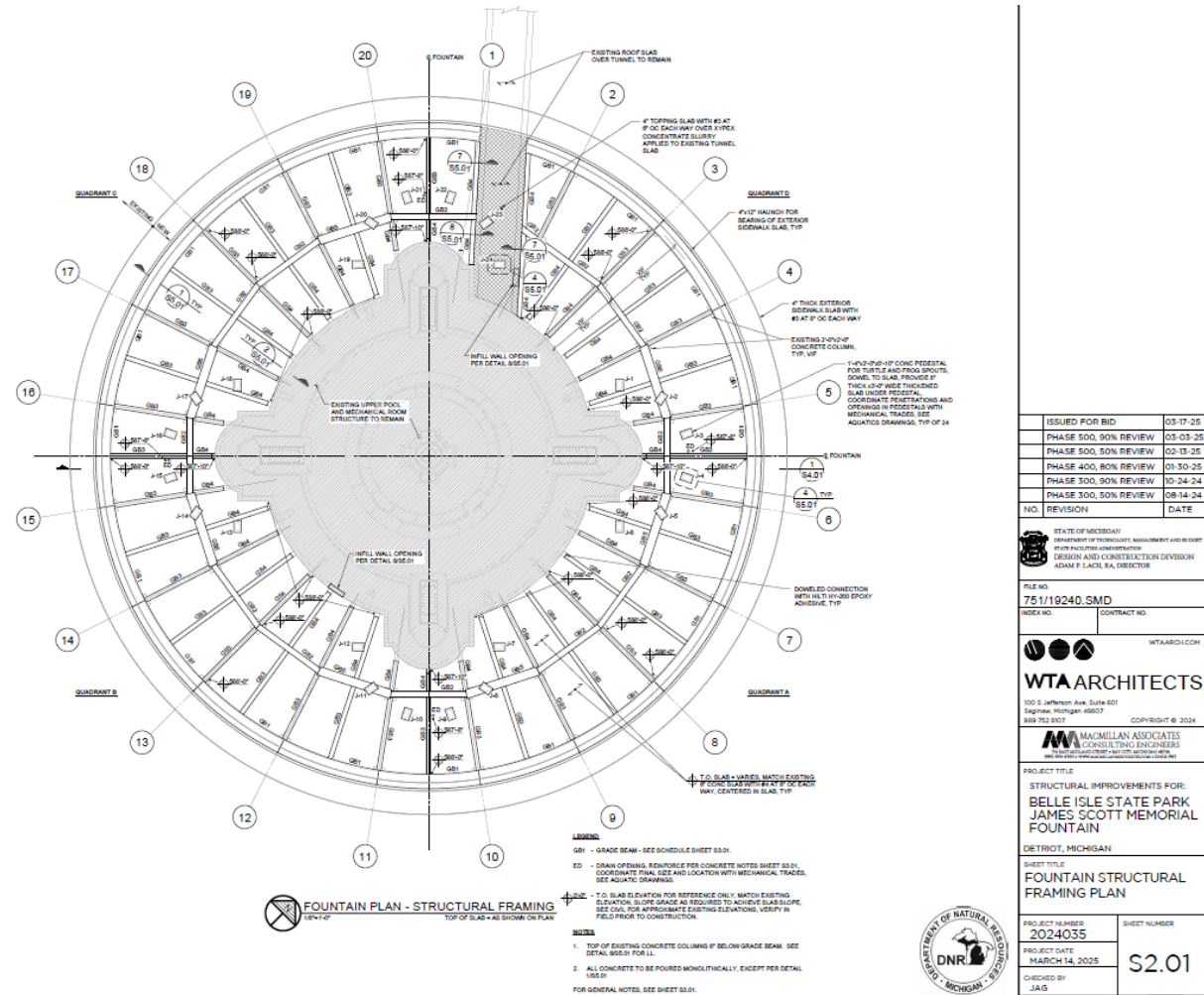
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• Scott Fountain Structural Repairs

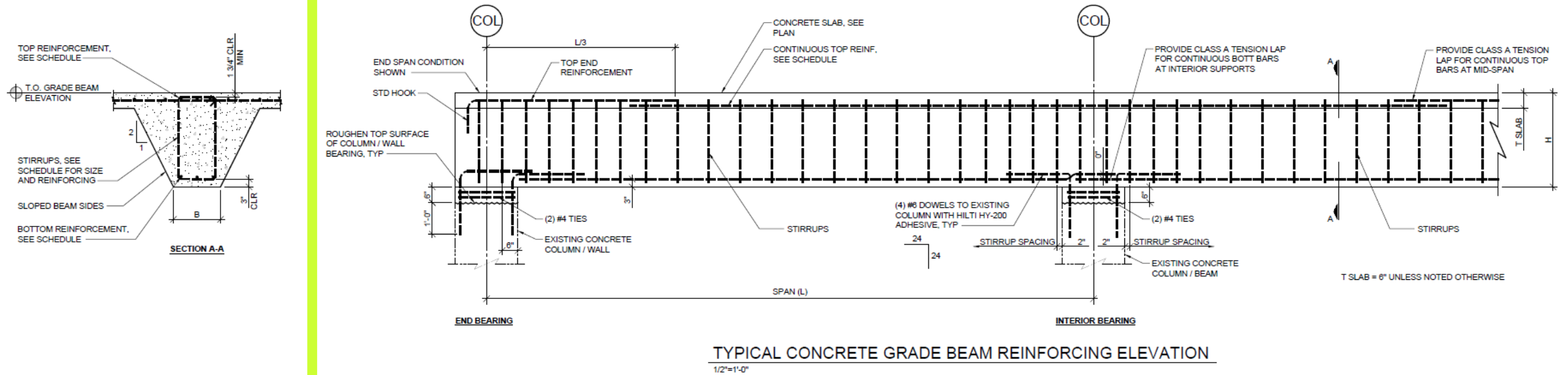
- New out basin.
- Concrete beams supporting basin will be replaced.
- Void under basin will be filled in and all utility lines in void space to be replaced to mechanical room.
- Ventilation system to be installed in mechanical room.
- Marble around outer edge of basin will need to be replaced.



Section of Scott Fountain construction drawings showing structural steel framing

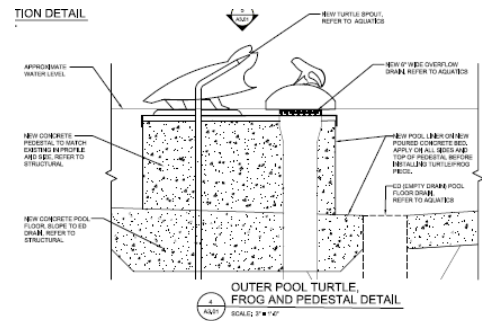
ARPA Project Update

American Rescue Plan Act



Section of Scott Fountain construction drawings for structural repairs showing area of scope of work.

American Rescue Plan Act



ARPA Project Update

American Rescue Plan Act

Bid Schedule: Late Summer, early Fall 2025

- **Zoo Removals**

- Reviewing complete infrastructure removals.

- **Shelter & Bathroom Facilities**

- Scope of work dependent on cost estimates.
- Shelter 8 & Shelter 2 are priorities.



Dilapidated zoo structures and elevated boardwalk.

ARPA Project Update – Former Zoo Removals



Casino

Porch Repairs



New ADA accessible walk formwork constructed off site and brought to park.



Covering new concrete during cold temperatures.

Casino

Porch Repairs



New ADA accessible walk formwork



New porch access follows curve of balcony.



Casino

ADA Accessible routes



Intended removal of cheekwall review, wall was poured up against brick wall.

Casino

Porch Repairs



Removing delaminated surfacing from steps and porch.

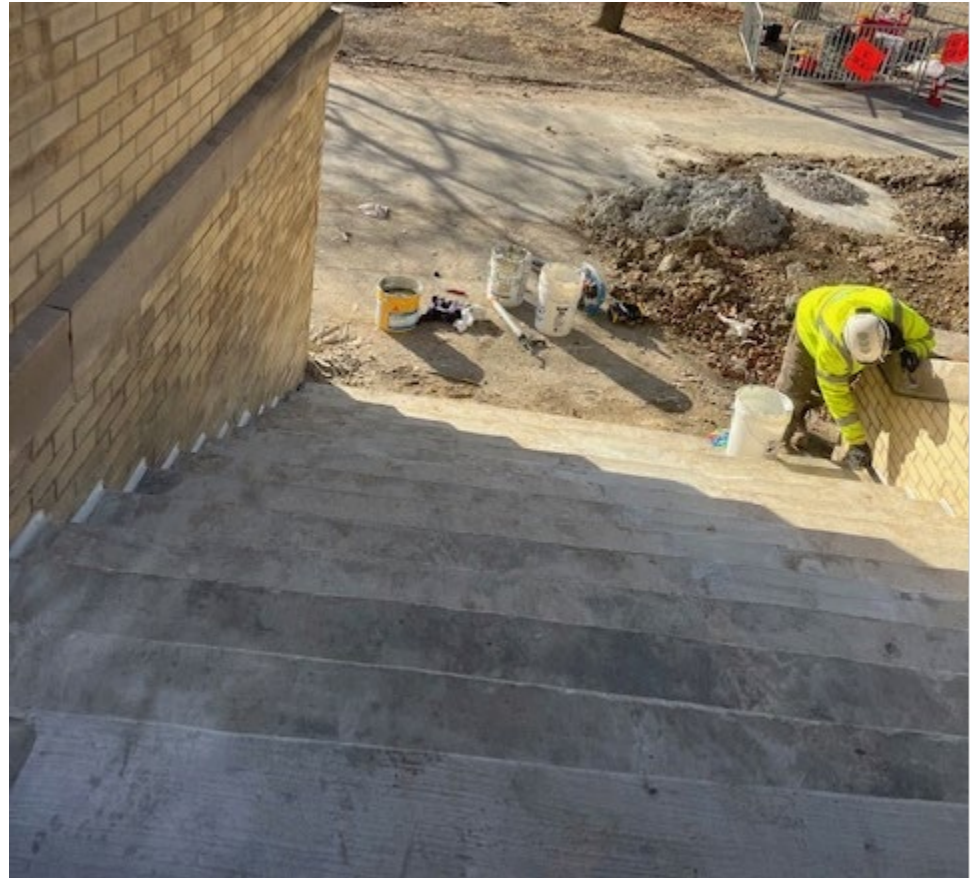


Casino

Porch Repairs



Removal of deteriorated and delaminated surfacing around porch.



Applying new caulk to porch steps.

Shelter #19 and Oxbow Restroom

DTMB Bid documents under review

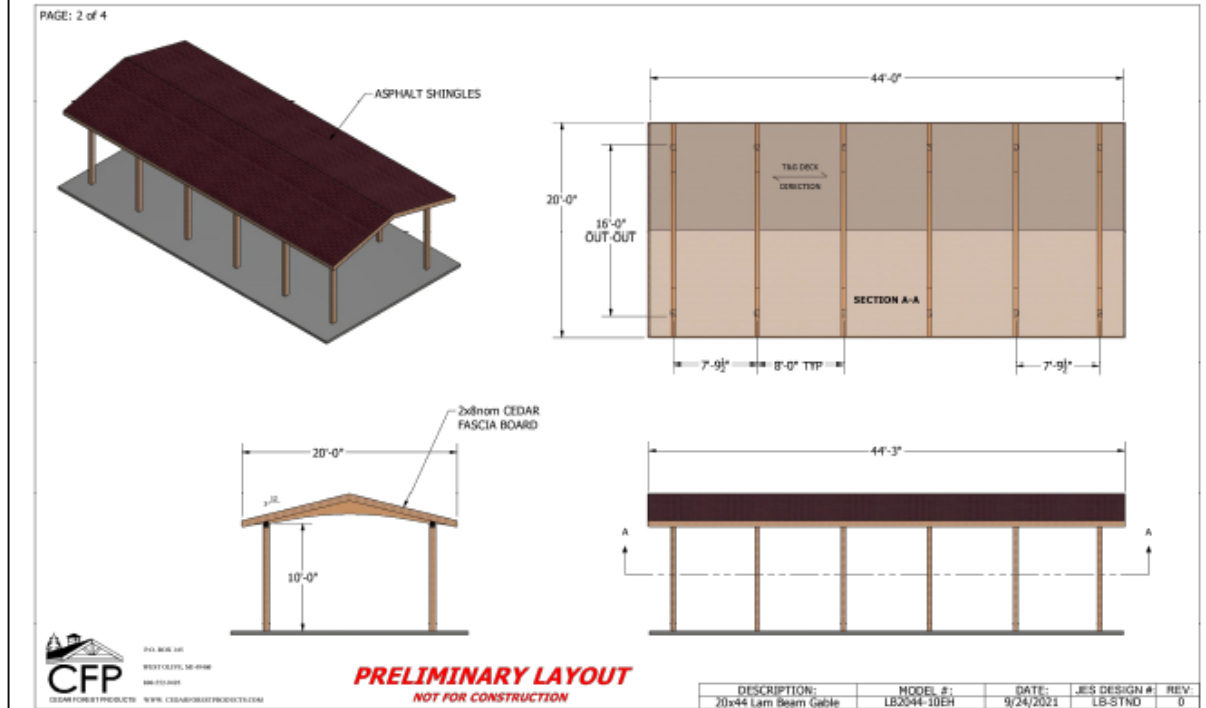
Construction Schedule: Summer 2025

• Oxbow Restroom

- Adding ADA stall in each restroom
- Refinish floors – polished concrete.
- New HVAC system.
- New drinking fountain.
- New bike maintenance station.
- Repair ADA parking spaces

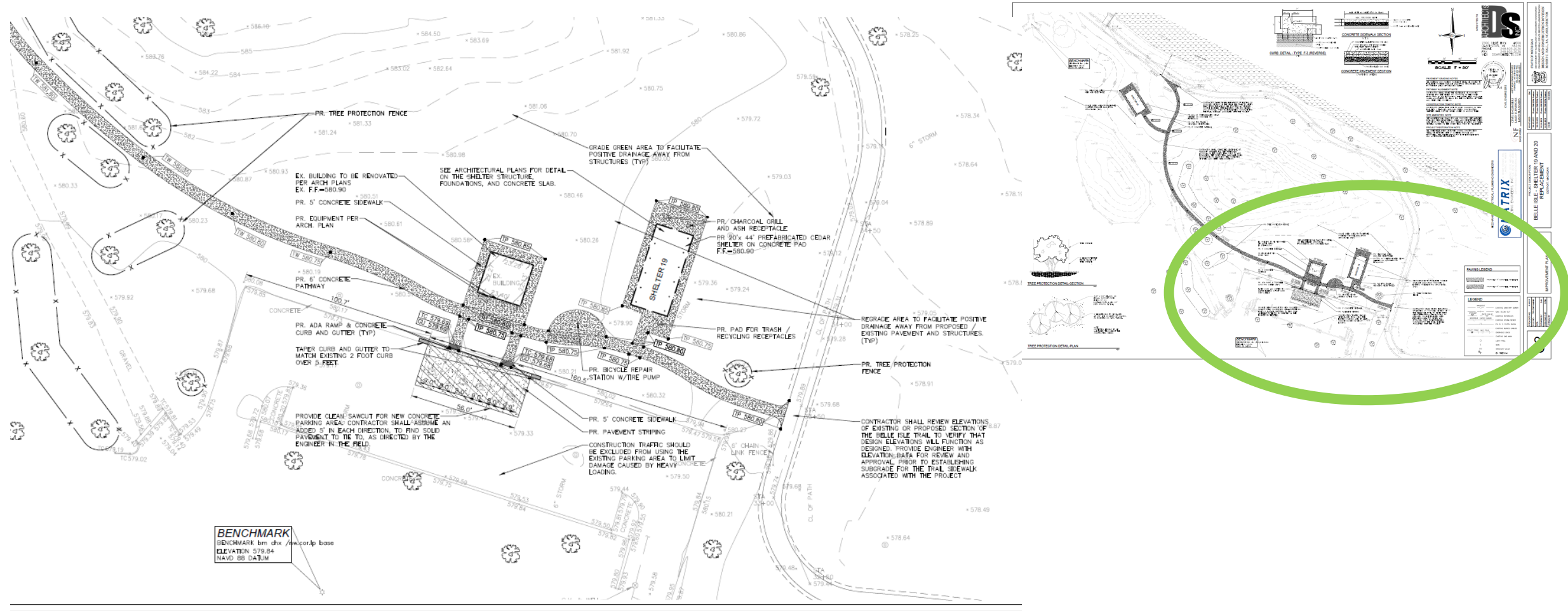
New Shelter

- Solar panels.
- Electric outlets
- Grill and waste disposal cans.



New Shelter Will be installed near Oxbow restroom.

Shelter #19 and Oxbow Restroom



Oxbow Bathroom and Shelter 20 to be in contract..

Shelter #19 and Oxbow Restroom

New Interpretive Signage

Fins, Tails, and Scales

Learning about Great Lake Fishes

The illustration shows a variety of fish from the Great Lakes region, including Yellow Perch, Rock Bass, Chain Pickerel, Common Carp, Bluegill, Longnose Darter, Largemouth Bass, Spottail Shiner, Pumpkinseed, Smallmouth Bass, Whitefish, Rock Bass, Striped Bass, Walleye, and others. A diagram of a fish's body parts is also included.

MOUTH

The orientation of a fish's mouth provides clues to its diet. A fish with an upturned or straight facing mouth finds its food within the water column. A downturned mouth often indicates a bottom-feeding fish.

DORSAL FINS

Dorsal fins are located on the back. A fish can have up to three dorsal fins. It serves to protect the fish against rolling, and assists during sudden turns and stops.

CAUDAL (TAIL) FIN

The shape of a fish's caudal fin combined with the structure and location of its dorsal fin, pectoral fins, pelvic fins and anal fin, affect a fish's speed and maneuverability. Different fin structures allow fish to live in a variety of habitats.

SPLIT DORSAL FIN

The shape of a fish's caudal fin combined with the structure and location of its dorsal fin, pectoral fins, pelvic fins and anal fin, affect a fish's speed and maneuverability. Different fin structures allow fish to live in a variety of habitats.

In the waters of the Detroit River, at the east end of Belle Isle, a diverse group of partners has built rocky reefs that provide new places for lake sturgeon, walleye, and lake whitefish to spawn. The intent is to improve habitat to help grow populations of these native fish.

Restoring Fish Habitat in the Detroit River

LAKE STURGEON: AN ANCIENT AND VITAL SPECIES

Lake sturgeon are unlike any other fish in the Great Lakes—they can grow up to 7 feet long and can weigh up to 300 pounds. They are slow to mature and do not begin reproducing until they are 15-20 years old. Females can live 80-150 years and males about 55 years.

Although they look a bit like sharks, they don't have teeth. Instead, they suck up invertebrates from the bottom of the river or lake with a mouth that looks like a vacuum-cleaner hose.

Lake sturgeon are considered threatened or endangered in 7 of the 8 Great Lakes states. Researchers estimate that their population is now 1 percent of what it once was.

Many scientists believe there isn't enough high quality spawning habitat for sturgeon, making projects like these important to their recovery. Protecting habitat for lake sturgeon benefits a number of other native fish—which also reproduce or find shelter in rocky areas along the river bottom.

CONSTRUCTED REEF PROJECTS

Reefs are built in the river to provide spawning habitat for lake sturgeon, walleye, and lake whitefish. The reefs are made of limestone and are designed to be durable and long-lasting.

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DID YOU KNOW? Some constructed reefs can be as long as a 1,000-foot freighter.

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+ FISH SPAWNING REEF PROJECT LOCATIONS

Spawning Reefs

Beginning in 2004, a team of scientists began designing and building rocky reefs in the St. Clair and Detroit rivers to replace some of the habitat that had been lost. Scientists continually study restored reefs to make sure fish are using them to produce healthy offspring.

The largest reef off of Belle Isle has more than 20,000 tons of rock and covers 4 acres—about 3 football fields—of river bottom. The reef is just 2 feet thick and is far enough below the surface to be out of sight and not influence boat traffic.

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New interpretive Signage on Northshore fishing area.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Construction Schedule: April- September 2025

- Contractor has started to remobilize on site, SESC fence installed on North side of park.
- Painting of bike lanes by MDOT will not take place until later this spring.



Wilson Trail Construction preparing for remobilization.

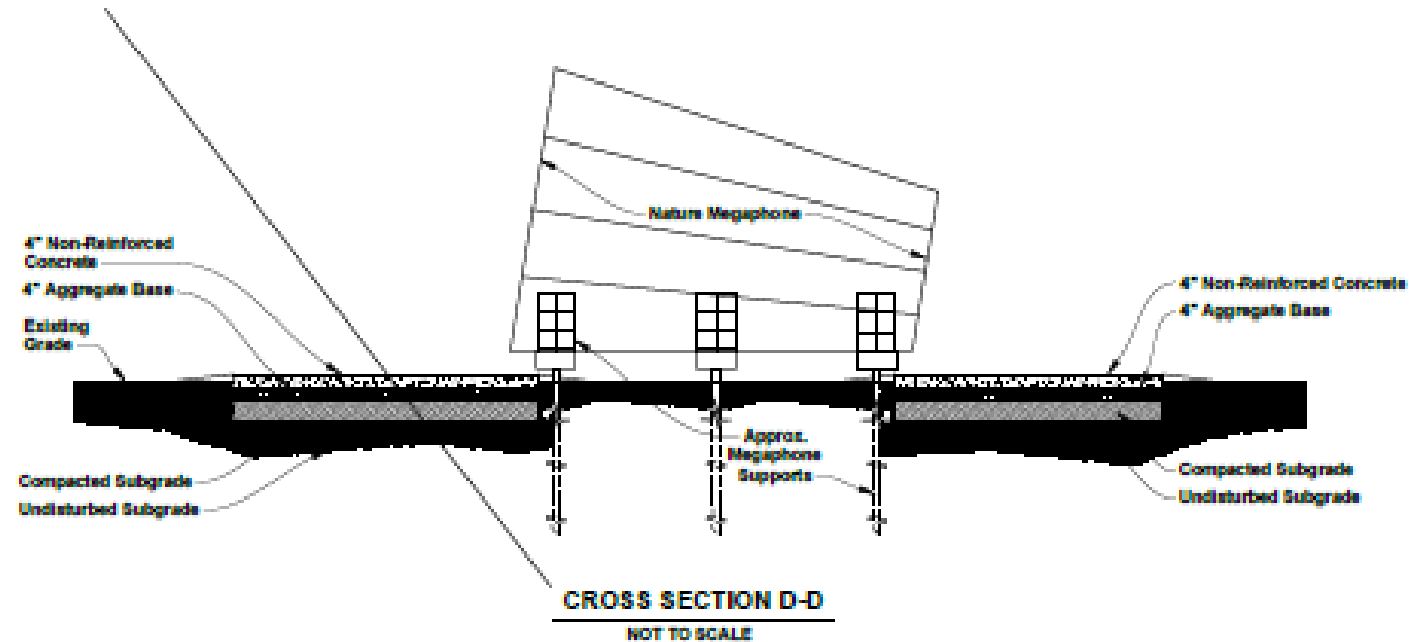
Nature's Megaphone

Construction Schedule: May-June 2025

- Atlantic Impact students completed megaphone last summer

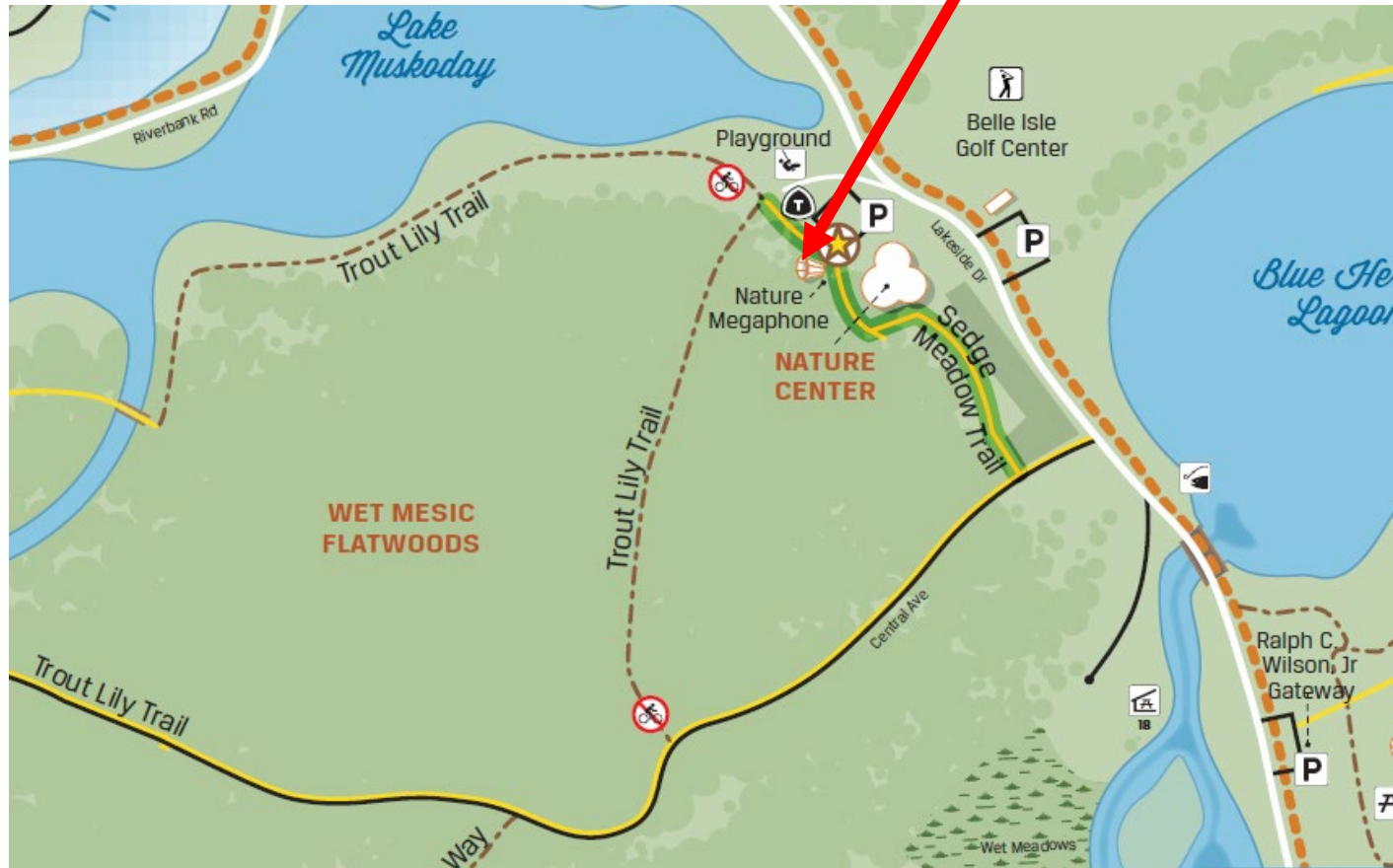
Engineering and permitting in progress

- Megaphone will be moved from Atlantic Impact shop to place behind Nature Center this spring.



Final layout and cost estimates pending..

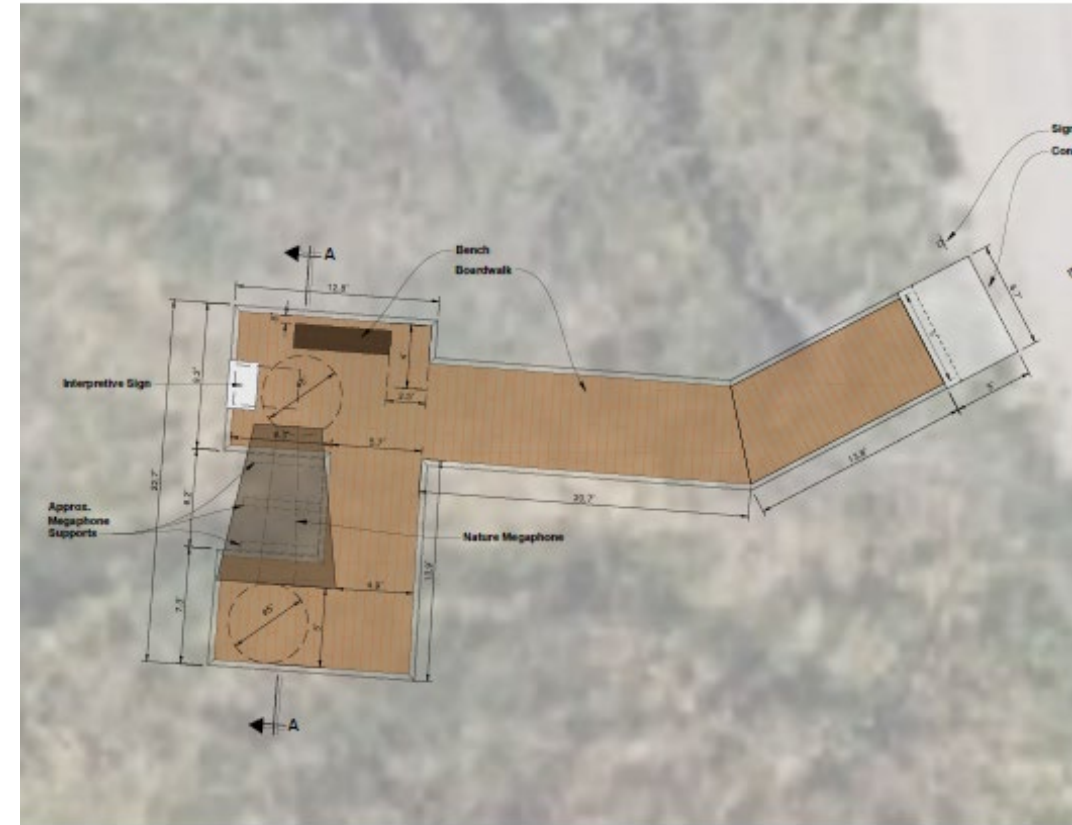
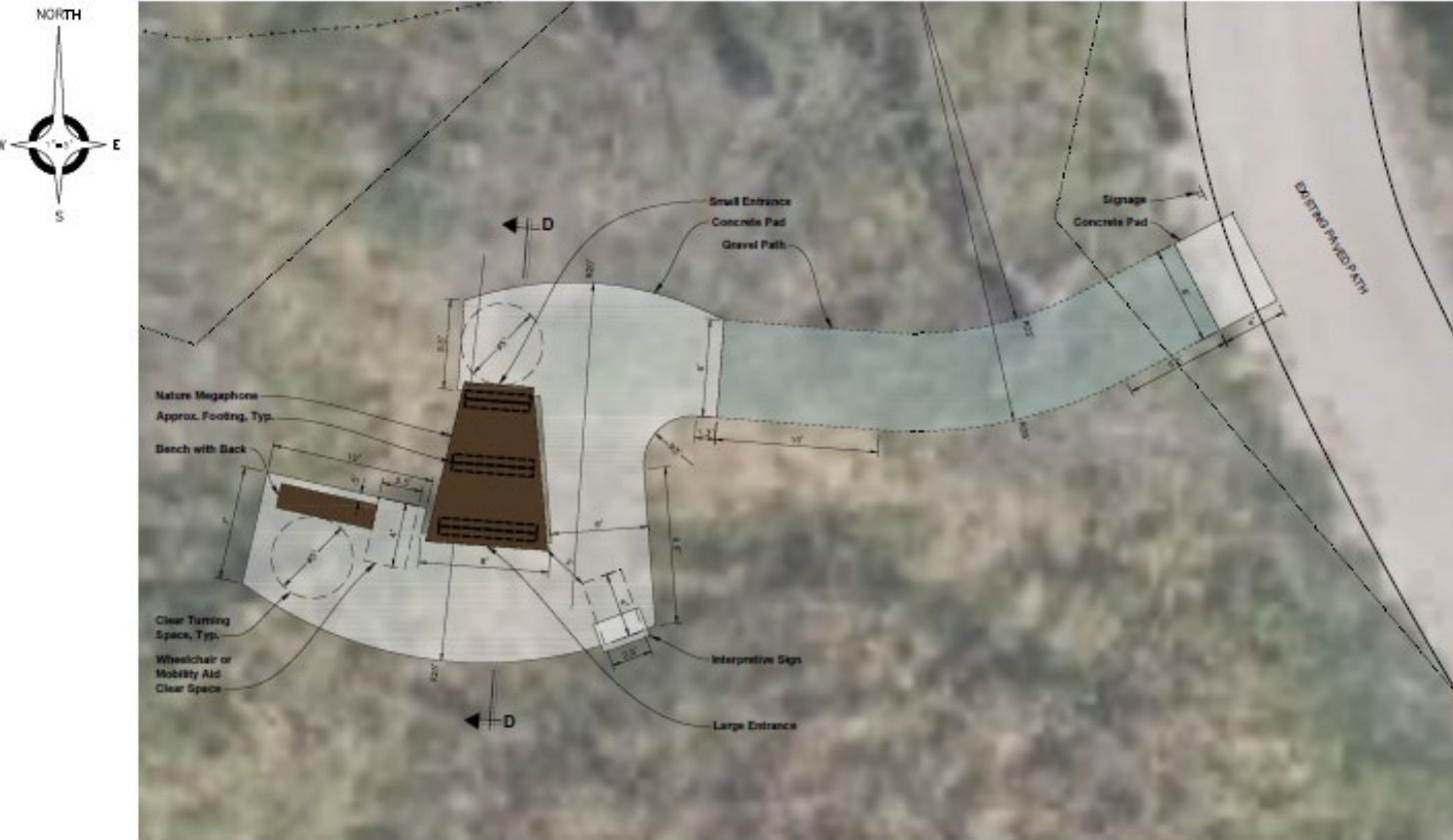
Nature's Megaphone



Made possible by the
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
by way of a Trustee Designated
Grant initiated by Jeff Littmann

The Nature Megaphone will add an exciting feature on the newer Sedge Meadow Trail...

Nature's Megaphone

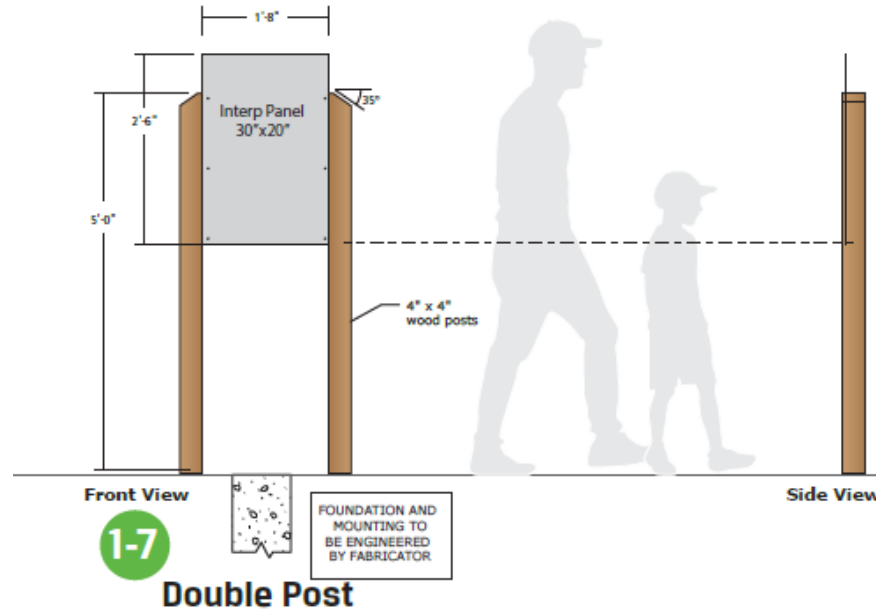


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Nature's Megaphone



1 Mini Kisok Option 2



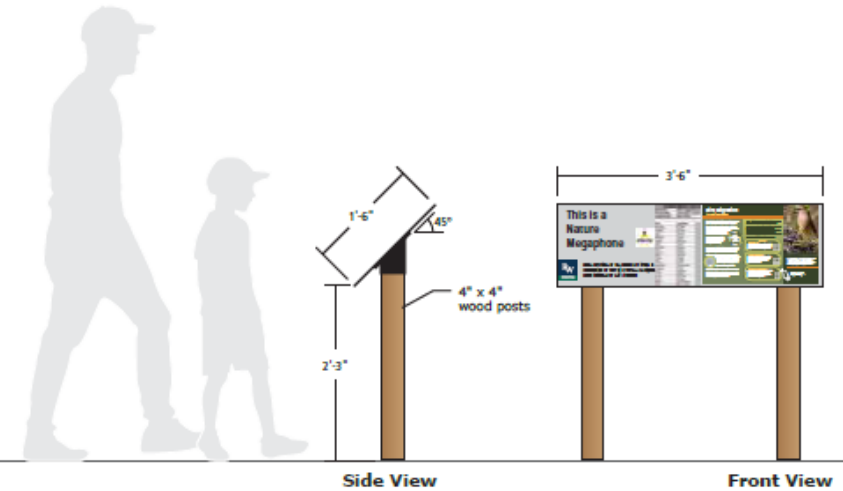
Front View

Side View

1-7

Double Post

FOUNDATION AND MOUNTING TO BE ENGINEERED BY FABRICATOR



Side View

Front View

2

45° Horiz Panel
Megaphone Location

Interpretive signage will acknowledge student's efforts..

Nature's Megaphone



Interpretive signage will acknowledge student's efforts..

Remick Bandshell

MOBig Grant Awarded - Engineering for Structure and Site Improvements

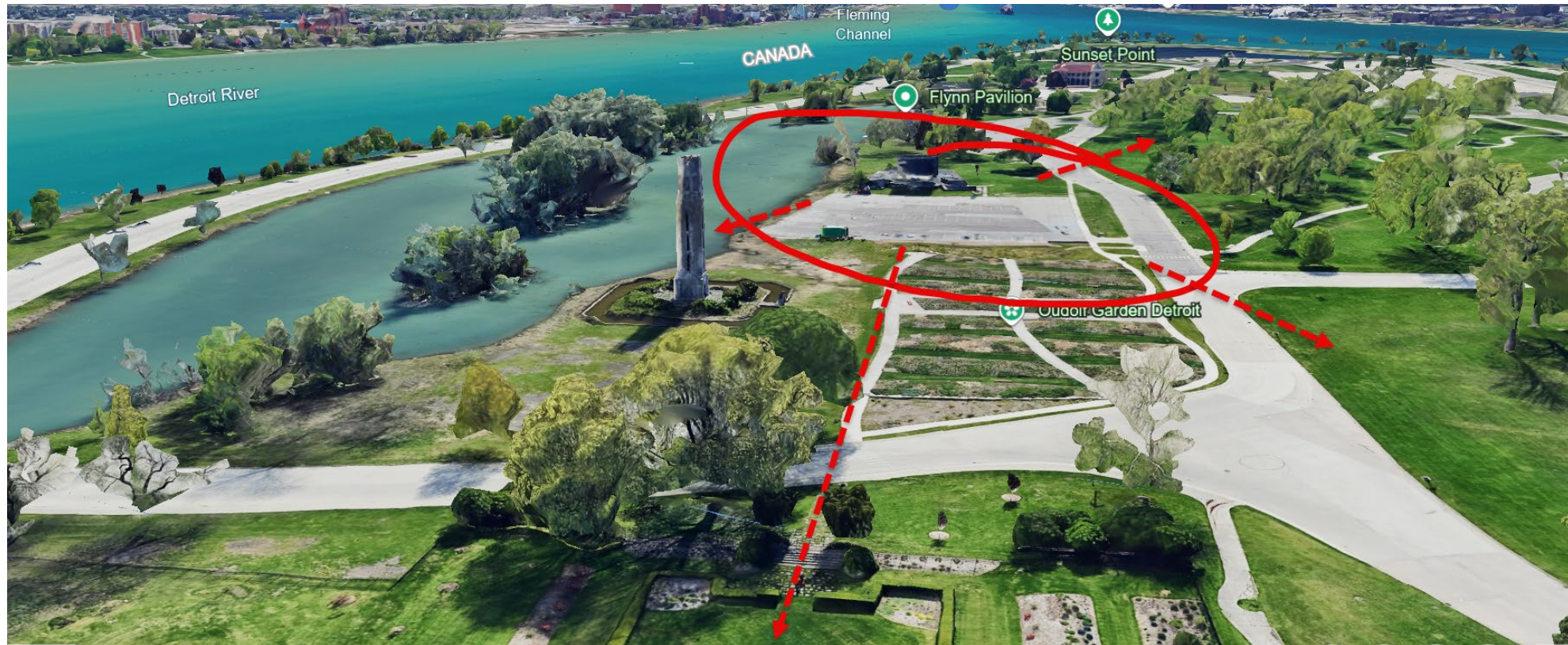
- **\$50,000 DNR Grant**
 - Friends Matching Grant
 - Cultural Recreation Passport Grant
- **\$200,000 MOBig fundraised amount**
- **\$250,000 Total amount to fund engineering study**
 - Previously MOBig funded structure assessment completed by Quinn Evans in 2019.



Craig Strain and Suzanne Nash, MOBig board members.

Remick Bandshell

MOBig Grant Awarded -
Engineering for Structure and Site Improvements



Remick Bandshell site adjacent to popular attractions in the park.